

REMARKS

Claim 1 is pending in this application. In the Office Action dated July 14, 2004, the Examiner took the following action: (1) rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 for double patenting over U.S. Patent No. 6,693,837 to Schaefer et al.

On July 16, 2004, applicants filed a Supplemental Preliminary Amendment (SPA) canceling claim 1 and adding new claims 61-133. It was received by the USPTO on July 19, 2004, as evidenced by a copy of the return date-stamped postcard.

On July 14, 2004, Examiner Lam mailed the first office action. The same was received by applicants on July 19, 2004.

On July 28, 2004, my paralegal, Denise Sheridan, spoke to Examiner Nelms. Examiner Lam was on vacation. Examiner Nelms confirmed the receipt of the SPA on July 19, 2004 and agreed to consider the SPA as a response to the office action dated July 14, 2004. Examiner Nelms said he would have Examiner Lam respond to our SPA with another non-final office action and if for some reason the next office action is noted as a final office action to call him back and he would remove the finality.

Therefore, for Examiner Lam's convenience, the amendment to the claims as listed above are a duplication of those claims as originally filed with the SPA.

All of the claims remaining in the application, 61-133, are now clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a timely Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Enclosures:

Postcard

Fee Transmittal Sheet (+copy)

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